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FREE GUIDE

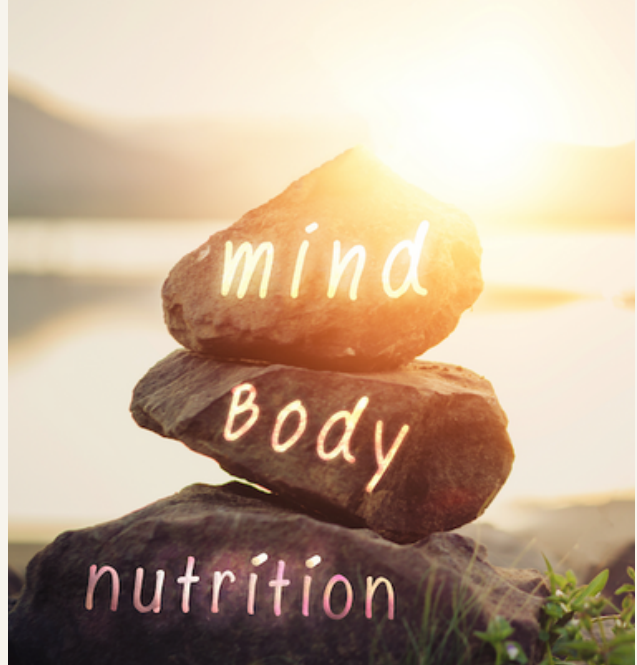
FIX YOUR DIGESTION NATURALLY



KEY INSIGHTS, TIPS AND RECIPES TO HELP YOU
GET YOUR DIGESTIVE HEALTH ON AN EVEN KEEL

BY SARAH GRANT

Ready to eat and live with more ease, energy and enjoyment?



Hello, I'm Sarah Grant,

I help people find peace in their relationship with food and reconnect with authentic, thriving health.

Working together, we draw on the latest in personalised nutrition to support your health, whilst empowering you to retune with your own eating intuition so that you can enjoy a balanced, sustainable relationship between mind, body and food.

I am really glad you found this ebook because I understand all too well (that's both personally and professionally), how chronic tummy troubles can be incredibly frustrating and impact quality of life.

If your digestive system doesn't work as it should, the result might be pain or discomfort right through to downright embarrassment at the gurgling noises and bad smells your body produces.

It doesn't have to be that way, yet I know many people try to muddle through for a long time before they seek help from practitioners like myself.

Meet your microbiome

What scientists call the 'microbiome' is a parallel universe of microorganisms living inside of us. These microorganisms run through-out the digestive tract, and are particularly concentrated in the large intestine. Most of the organisms in this ecosystem are bacteria, and it's estimated we have up to ten times the amount of bacteria as we do human cells.

The balance of different bacteria in your digestive system has implications for not only your innards, but your health in general. In short, it's important to have the right kinds of bacteria in the right places. It matters that the ratio of 'good' to 'bad' bacteria works for you. When you are out of balance (that's when there is more unfavourable bacteria and other microorganisms) nutritionists call this 'dysbiosis'

Dysbiosis can result in your digestive system becoming a more favourable environment for yeasts like Candida, or for parasites.

There are some places where you don't really want many bacteria, whether good or bad, and that includes the small intestine. Your body should do a daily swoosh of all bacteria from the small intestine down to the colon (this mechanism is called the Migrating Motor Complex).

There are many reasons why this might not happen, for example having food poisoning in the past, and the result is that the bacteria left behind in the small intestine feast on the food you're eating, causing bloating, wind, feelings of nausea, diarrhoea and constipation, or a combination of the two. Essentially, all the things you might be linking to Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

The ideal situation is that you bring your digestive problems to a Nutritional Therapy Practitioner for personalised support and guidance. They can help you get to the bottom of the problem (excuse the pun) of why your system isn't working the way it should. In most cases, this usually involves some testing to get those deeper insights into the areas of imbalance.

But, whatever your situation, my aim for the rest of this ebook is to share with you some key insights and simple tips that may just help you start getting your digestion back on an even keel straight away.

Sarah x

Sarah Grant, Gut Reaction
Registered Nutritional Therapist & Intuitive Eating Coach
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*Benefits of a **happy** tummy*

5 important things your gut bacteria do for you

1 Kill bugs and hostile bacteria

These can cause unpleasant symptoms or disease – like the ones that cause food poisoning or stomach ulcers.

2 Boost your immunity

60% of your immunity is in your gut and the immune tissue in your digestive system is very sensitive to bacterial activity. The good bacteria also encourage the body to make a particular kind of antibody that stops you getting sick.

3 Improve digestion

Some bacteria help you break down particular foods and even help with the muscular contractions that move food through your system – thus keeping you regular.

4 Make vitamins & help you absorb nutrients better

Your gut bacteria are responsible for making many B vitamins, and these same bacteria help you absorb minerals in the food you eat better.

5 Protect against disease

Some bacteria produce enzymes that turn dietary fibre into short chain fatty acids (SCFAs) which may have protective properties for our health.

It is now understood now that SCFAs can help protect against heart diseases by regulating cholesterol and having a positive impact on fats in the blood. A particular type of SCFA called butyrate has been shown to be protective against cancer.

5 secrets of good digestion

These tips can have an immediate impact



1 Use your senses

The first step in the digestive process is often overlooked, but it's a really important one. Known as the cephalic phase, it's triggered when you see or smell food. You are literally whetting your appetite. When you start thinking about the lovely meal you are going to prepare you are getting your digestive juices flowing.

The enzymes in your saliva help you break down your food more easily, so when the time comes, your body is ready to start digesting food before you have even cut the first slice, never mind actually put anything in your mouth.

It may sound like an incredibly simple step - and it is - but these days we are often so busy that we don't make the time to think about our food in this way. If you find you're always eating on the go, throwing a sandwich down your neck at your desk, or having a TV dinner, the cephalic phase is a vital step you are missing out on.

One trick is to be mindful or more present, and try to spend a few moments absorbed in thinking about your tasty lunch before you eat it in order to help really get your digestive juices going.



2 Chew your food

Your stomach does not have teeth! Chewing your food is the second phase of digestion, and it's key when it comes to good gut health. With proper chewing, you are mechanically breaking down the food into smaller pieces, so that there's a greater surface area and the digestive enzymes can get to work more easily, doing their job.

And the bad news? If you're not chewing properly, it's highly likely that you're not digesting your food properly. And that means you won't be absorbing the vital nutrients in food either.

Not chewing also means the food you eat takes much longer to break down, and, as it hangs around in your digestive system, it can start to ferment, causing uncomfortable wind, gas and bloating. Another sign you need to chew more is if you start to see undigested food in your stools.

Don't worry about chewing a certain number of times – that all depends on what you are eating and various other factors. Instead try this test: chew your food enough that if someone asked you to spit it out, they wouldn't know what you had been eating!



3 Balance your stomach acid

Sales for heartburn tablets are skyrocketing because so many people wrongly assume that their digestive troubles are down to too much stomach acid. But interestingly, what nutrition professionals frequently find in clinic is the total opposite.

Getting old, stress, and some over-the-counter medications can cause your stomach acid levels to drop to the extent that you don't produce enough to digest food sufficiently. Why is this important? The stomach acid you produce not only kills any bacteria in the food you are eating, it also breaks down the protein in your meal. If you're not digesting the protein element in food, it can start to ferment, creating gases that force up the oesophageal sphincter muscle (a type of muscle flap) and what little stomach acid there is, can then escape. So that burning feeling, especially if accompanied by smelly gas, can be a sign that your digestion isn't as strong as it should be.

One solution is to have a teaspoon of apple cider vinegar before each main meal. It is important you choose apple cider vinegar with 'the mother', rather than one you buy in the supermarket (that's for your chips).

However, there are a few people who genuinely produce too much stomach acid. If you try the apple cider vinegar trick and it seems to make things worse, you can neutralise the acid by taking a little bicarbonate of soda (the stuff you use in baking).



4 Take a digestive enzyme supplement

Digestive enzymes break down our food into nutrients so our bodies can absorb them. The first few tips will all help promote the stimulation of these naturally. But as you age, you naturally produce fewer of these helpful enzymes.

You can counteract this by increasing your intake of foods that provide good concentrates of them. For example, eating pineapple or papaya before a meal may help.

If you aren't a fan of these fruits, instead you can try a digestive enzyme capsule which will give your system a gentle boost to help it do its job properly.



5 Take time out

The Migrating Motor Complex (see my intro above) won't work whilst your digestive tract is full and working hard. This is why it typically kicks in overnight whilst we are sleeping.

But if you're struggling with digestive challenges, it may be helpful to consider spacing out your meals so your system gets the extra opportunities to rest. Eating every five to six hours is a good benchmark and gives the body time to completely digest the previous meal and have a break before you put it work again.

This might require a little vigilance if you are frequent gazer. What's more, for some people with poor digestion, eating small meals more frequently may feel better - I can help you work out an approach that suits you. If you try it, there will inevitably be days when your eating routine differs, so don't beat yourself up about meal timings. Just try to find and broadly stick to a daily meal time rhythm that really works for you.

Happy Tummy Foods

Some foods are particularly good for supporting your digestive system



Cruciferous Vegetables

These smelly vegetables bring amazing health benefits on a number of different levels. Since we're talking about foods that helpful to your digestion, you should know that they contain compounds called glucosinolates, which are fermented by bacteria and used as fuel. They are prebiotic.

Examples are bok choy, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, rocket, spring greens and watercress.



Fermented Foods

Fermented foods have a long tradition in some parts of the world, especially Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. Bacteria (and sometimes beneficial yeasts) might be involved in the process, and the result is an increase of good bacteria in the foods. You've probably heard of live or 'bio' yoghurt.

Some of these other probiotic foods might sound peculiar and a little 'advanced' for most regular people. However, they are now commonly found on supermarket shelves and, even if they might not be the kind of product you would usually go for, it may be worth experimenting. Kimchi, in particular, is often combined with chilli and other flavours and is far tastier than its name might suggest.

Fermented drinks

Like other fermented products, these were once only found in health food shops and were perhaps the prevail of people who ate a very clean and unprocessed diet. These were a secret waiting for the masses to discover! Often flavoured with fruits, they really are delicious and do not taste 'worthy'. You'll find them in the chilled drinks section in most supermarkets.

So give Actimel and Activia a miss and look for traditional fermented products such as Kombucha (fermented tea - sweet and fizzy but without sugar), and Kefir (typically fermented dairy and very much like a yoghurt drink, although coconut and water Kefirs are also available).



Fibre

Fibre is one of the best things to eat plenty of to support healthy digestion. although, like most foods, if you eat fibre to excess this may contribute to problems, so it is about finding the balance for you. Fibre is described as being either insoluble or soluble.

Insoluble fibre

This part of the plant wall in fruit and vegetables. It's indigestible so it passes right through your system, sweeping up toxins and other waste products as it goes, and keeping you regular. The undigested fibre is also fermented by gut bacteria, producing the beneficial short chain fatty acids I mentioned earlier.

You can find insoluble fibre in: fruits and vegetables, beans and lentils, oats, wholegrain foods like brown rice and wheat (if tolerated).

Soluble fibre

This can be partially digested and is well celebrated for its ability to reduce cholesterol in the blood and help normalise blood sugar levels.

You can find soluble fibre in: oats, veg, fruit (especially apples, pears, berries and citrus fruits, beans and lentils).



Anti-microbial foods

Some foods exert a natural antibiotic or anti-fungal effect and may be useful for helping keeping nasties like pathogenic bacteria or unwelcome yeasts at bay.

These include caprylic acid found in coconut. Coconut oil is also a very good oil to use in cooking, especially at high temperatures.

Garlic contains the ingredient allicin, which has historically proven itself to be an effective killer of both bacteria and viruses, making it a great immune-boosting ingredient. Use it raw wherever possible.

Also use olive oil as the oleic acid has anti-bacterial properties. Use it generously to dress salads and veg.

The question of sugar



'What about sugar?' is a question I'm commonly asked. Do you really need to avoid it?

Whilst a little sugar is very unlikely to make a difference to most people, if you have tummy troubles then foods rich in high amounts of refined or added sugar may be something to be mindful around so you can understand if and how you're reacting to them.

However, it's not helpful to think of these foods as 'bad', and it is very unlikely you will need to take an abstinence approach to eating these foods, particularly if you focus on supporting your gut in other ways.

If you feel out of control around sugary foods, are dependent on them for comfort, or swing between restricting them and bingeing on them (an all or nothing approach!), then working with a practitioner who is versed in Intuitive Eating can help you drop the struggle with these foods.

This can in turn help you both support your gut health and overall wellbeing.



Ginger & star anise soothing tea

Fresh ginger has been used for millennia to ease digestive discomfort. The addition of star anise adds a gentle, warming taste!

Ingredients

3cm fresh ginger, peeled and chopped

1 star anise

250ml freshly boiled water

Method

Put the ginger and star anise in a large mug and pour over the boiled water. Steep for 10 minutes to allow the flavours to disperse.



Pomegranate & walnut salad

This dish is bursting with colourful veg that are packed with polyphenols. These in turn have probiotic qualities. It's a veritable feast for the eyes as well as your tummy!

Ingredients

- 1 generous handful of rocket
- 1 small purple carrot, grated
- ¼ pomegranate (seeds only)
- ¼ sliced beetroot
- 15g purple cabbage, finely sliced
- Small handful of raw walnuts
- Sprig of fresh mint

Method

Put all the ingredients in a bowl and toss together with a simple dressing made from extra virgin olive oil and apple cider (or white wine) vinegar.



Kimchi

This is a traditional Korean fermented dish. During the fermentation process, the naturally occurring bacteria produce lactic acid, which is a natural preservative. Thanks to its probiotic qualities, it's a favourite among nutrition professionals.

Ingredients

Medium Chinese cabbage, cut into bite-sized pieces

1 tsp sea salt

1 fresh chilli, seeded and finely sliced

4 spring onions, finely sliced

4 cm fresh ginger, grated

2 cloves garlic, crushed or finely chopped

Freshly ground black pepper

1 tsp sugar

Method

Put the cabbage in a glass bowl, sprinkle with salt, and cover with a plate smaller than the bowl. Add weights - a couple of full tin cans will do - to squash the cabbage down. Leave overnight. Next day, remove the plate and weights/ cans and drain the liquid off. Stir in the rest of the ingredients and put into a clean preserving jar, leaving a small gap at the top. Press down until the juices rise and the liquid covers the kimchi.

Leave on the kitchen counter for 3-5 days to ferment. Check it every morning, pressing down the kimchi into the liquid and releasing any gas bubbles. Refrigerate for 3-4 days before eating. Serve a tablespoonful with hot or cold meals. Keeps for up to 3 months in the fridge. Dried chilli can be used instead of fresh.



Sauerkraut

This has been a staple in German cuisine for years. Simple to make, sauerkraut is salty, tangy, crunchy and tastes delicious. A natural probiotic, it's also used to support digestive health.

Ingredients

(makes a medium jar)

Small-medium red or white cabbage

Sea salt or Himalayan pink salt.

Grated ginger (optional)

Method

Cut the cabbage into quarters and take out the centre stalk. Finely shred, either by hand or using a food processor. Weigh the prepared cabbage. Add 2 teaspoons of salt per 500g of cabbage. Pound the shredded cabbage with a kraut pounder or the end of a wooden rolling pin, until the juices start to run.

Add the grated ginger, if using. Cover with a tea towel and leave overnight. Pound again, then put into a clean preserving jar or other large glass jar. Press cabbage down until the juices cover the top. Leave on the kitchen counter for 4-6 days. Each morning, press the cabbage down. When the bubbles have stopped appearing close the lid and store in the fridge. Serve on the side of hot or cold meals, but eat raw to get the benefit from the live bacteria. If heated, the live bacteria may be lost. Keeps for up to 3 months in the fridge.

Ready for change?



Sarah x

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Thank you for reading this booklet and taking a step to empower yourself with information that can really make a difference to your digestive health and overall wellbeing.

I hope you manage to take action and notice some immediate benefits.

If you continue to be troubled by chronic digestive symptoms or have more complex gut-related health concerns, or if you are struggling more generally in your relationship with food and your body, I can help.

Working together with me, one-to-one, through my transformational 3-month *Rebalance* programme you can turn your gut health around.

My goals are to help you to identify potential problems or areas of imbalance that may be contributing to your symptoms, and to help you develop better digestion and energy through strategic nutritional support and manageable changes to diet and lifestyle that promote long-term health.

I will make testing and supplement recommendations as appropriate, and always prioritise my clients overall wellbeing and relationship with food through my approach.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Not quite ready? Would it simply help to chat things through with me? I invite you to book a complimentary exploratory chat through my website.

[LET'S CHAT](#)



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